



***Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
June 24-28, 2013***

Floodwaters devastate First Nations communities in Alberta Communities near Calgary are under evacuation order

[CBC News](#)

Jun 23, 2013 8:17 PM MT



Siksika First Nation, about 100 kilometres east of Calgary, remains in a state of emergency on Sunday, days after the Bow River overflowed and caused extensive damage to the Alberta reserve. (John Rietj/CBC)

First Nation communities near Calgary are also feeling the brunt of raging floodwaters in Alberta.

East of Calgary, the Siksika Nation is seeing water levels recede

today after floods ravaged the area Thursday and Friday.

Donations needed

- Toiletries.
- Bottled Water.
- Blankets.
- Baby items.
- Towels.
- Shoes.
- Non-perishable food.
- Toys.

- Clothing racks and hangers.

Chief Fred Rabbit Carrier said hundreds of homes have been destroyed in the reserve which now looks like a lake, and more than 1,000 people have been forced out of their homes.

The province issued a mandatory evacuation order for much of the aboriginal community as the rain-engorged Bow River breached its banks, knocking out several roads.

"I've never seen anything like this in my life. It's very stressful," Rabbit Carrier said in a statement.

The current priority is the emergency response effort as crews scramble finding shelter for those who are homeless.

"We just want to ensure people are safe," Rabbit Carrier said.

Emergency workers are also rushing to rescue trapped horses and other farm animals.

Officials say it could be weeks before people can return home. Residents are being directed to the Deerfoot Sportsplex. The Siksika Emergency Team can be reached at 403-734-3999 for more details and volunteer and donation inquiries.

A boil water advisory has also been issued for the Siksika First Nation. Schools in the area are closed until further notice.

Morley sewer problems

A precarious situation exists on the Morley reserve west of Calgary as the community, also known as Stoney Nakoda Nation, is under an evacuation order and dealing with waterlogged homes.

Roughly 3,000 people call the area home.

The big problem right now is sewer backup, and there's a desperate need for manpower to help pump water from the flooded areas.

Officials are asking people in Morley not to stay home, saying it's not safe. Residents can head to the high school for food, clothing and shelter. The evacuation centre can be reached at 403-881-2755 if people have donations.

The Chiniki Learning Center is providing shelter for the Morley community as well.

A group from Cochrane, including CBC News Calgary anchor Carla Beynon, headed out with some supplies — like water from local company ProH2O.

"We just heard last night that people needed help," said Beynon, who lives in the community beside the reserve.

The Cochrane RCMP detachment has an officer on site in Morley at the command center working with the director of emergency services.

"The current status of the Morley First Nation is that the community has not been affected by flooding from Bow River," said RCMP.

"The issues on Morley First Nation stem from rain water washing out some remote roads, sewer backup and some basement flooding. The situation is improving."

Tsuu T'ina Nation on the southwest edge of Calgary also said homes and an area golf course have been damaged by floodwaters.

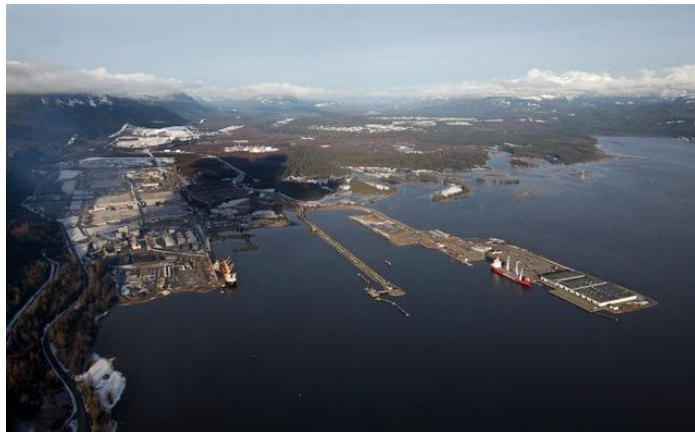
Bighorn and Eden Valley reserves southwest of Calgary are also under an evacuation order and Eden Valley is under a boil water advisory.

Hearings into Northern Gateway pipeline proposal wrap today

[Vancouver Sun](#)

June 24, 2013 1:39 PM

Robin Rowland



Douglas Channel, the proposed termination point for an oil pipeline in the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project, is pictured in an aerial view in Kitimat, B.C.

TERRACE — The federal government was trying to slip in evidence about the safety of the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline on the last day of public hearings into the project, aboriginal and environmental

groups say, even though the panel had already rejected the evidence.

The Enbridge (TSX:ENB) Northern Gateway Joint Review Panel, which has been holding public hearings since January 2013, wrapped up the hearings Monday. Panel chairwoman Sheila Leggett said members would present a final report to the federal government by the end of this year.

Environmental and aboriginal groups urged panel members to reject the argument last week of Jim Shawin, a Department of Justice lawyer who quoted a March 18 news release that referred to new measures to protect the coast with a "world class" tanker system.

Rosanne Kyle, who represents the Gitxaala First Nation, told the panel the argument was not supported by evidence.

"Give no weight to press releases," Kyle told the panel.

She also noted that Northern Gateway President John Carruthers has already told the panel he "could not attest to the accuracy" of the information in the news releases on the Department of Transport website and so the panel ruled it was inadmissible.

Christopher Jones, representing the province of British Columbia, echoed Kyle's arguments saying there was no evidence before the panel about the federal tanker safety program.

He urged the panel to base its decision "on evidence and not anything else."

Cheryl Brown, who represents the environmental group Douglas Channel Watch, noted that the federal government has not released any details of its safety plans and nothing has been passed by Parliament.

The reference to the safety plans was "only rhetoric to gain social licence," she said.

Enbridge was also at work Monday to clarify its offer to aboriginal groups along the route of the proposed pipeline.

One offer obtained by The Canadian Press indicated the amount would total as little as \$70,000 a year for some bands, but the company said late Sunday that is not the average offer and in fact, the average range would be about three times that amount.

Northern Gateway has offered aboriginal groups along the route the opportunity to buy into a 10-per-cent equity stake in the pipeline

A legal assessment for one of the bands compiled in 2011 and also obtained by The Canadian Press, said the anticipated annual average net income — after repayment

of loans with one per cent interest for Enbridge over and above the rate at which the company borrows the funds — would be \$70,500 a year.

The assessment expressed concern that the bands would have to borrow the money to buy into the agreement from the company, but an Enbridge spokesman said the offer to borrow the funds was made at the request of aboriginal groups, which might not be able to obtain as low a rate of interest as the pipeline company.

Enbridge spokesman Paul Stanway said the \$70,500 would be on the lower end of the scale and would be for a band located some distance from the pipeline route.

"The numbers reflect the impact that the project would have on a particular aboriginal community," Stanway said Sunday, adding that distance from the actual line is one factor in the equation.

Some aboriginal leaders say the amount is a far cry from the path out of poverty the company claims.

Only nine of the total of 60 interveners chose to participate in Monday's hearings which are limited to responses to oral arguments that were heard last week. In contrast to packed hearing rooms at the beginning of the process, the chairs in the room Monday were only about one-third full.

As the panel grapples with safety, along with other issues, Enbridge Inc., announced Monday it has shut down pipelines in northern Alberta as a result of a weekend spill of synthetic crude.

The spill from Line 37, about 70 kilometres southeast of Fort McMurray, Alta., caused Enbridge to close its Athabasca and Waupisoo pipelines — a major part of the network that serves Alberta's oilsands.

The 540-kilometre Athabasca line can carry up to 570,000 barrels per day of crude from the Athabasca and Cold Lake regions to Hardisty, Alta., a major pipeline hub in eastern Alberta, about 200 kilometres southeast of Edmonton.

The Waupisoo line can carry up to 600,000 barrels per day to Edmonton from Cheecham Terminal, near the site of the spill.

The company estimates between 500 and 750 barrels of oil had spilled. A spokesman for Enbridge was not immediately available for comment Monday.

The company said Sunday that unusually heavy rains may have resulted in a ground movement that affected Line 37.

© Copyright (c)

National Chief Shawn Atleo, Prime Minister Stephen Harper meet quietly, away from spotlight

[Montreal Gazette](#)

June 24, 2013

Michael Woods



Unlike with some of their past encounters, such as that seen in this file photo, National Chief Shawn Atleo and Prime Minister Stephen Harper met away from the spotlight recently. Photograph by: Pat McGrath/Ottawa Citizen, Postmedia News

OTTAWA — More than six months after meeting amid highly charged protests on Parliament Hill, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the head of Canada's largest aboriginal group finally met again last week — this time, more quietly.

Harper's long-awaited meeting with Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo occurred in stark contrast to their meeting on Jan. 11, which took place with grassroots indigenous Idle No More movement protests ringing in the streets outside and an Ontario chief holding a liquid-diet protest nearby.

That meeting also happened amid much political pressure, with some chiefs loudly opposing Atleo's decision to attend. This time, the meeting — held last Thursday — was announced after the fact and with little fanfare.

In January, the sides emerged pledging to move on treaty rights and comprehensive claims. At the time, Harper's office said the two would have a follow-up meeting "in the coming weeks."

However, Atleo told a Senate committee late last month that he and Harper still had not met since January. And in an interview with Postmedia News earlier this month, he downplayed the importance of such a meeting.

"Progress should not be determined about whether or not I meet with or talk with the prime minister," he said.

Atleo has also expressed frustration lately at a lack of progress on First Nations issues, saying a needed transformative change to the government's approach hasn't happened. The Harper government is touting recently passed pieces of legislation that it says will help improve drinking water, financial transparency and property rights for aboriginal women on reserves.

But in an open letter to chiefs and councils last week, Atleo said the AFN has been clear in its opposition to those new laws. A common objection has been to an alleged lack of consultation with aboriginal people.

"Recent legislation makes it essential that we continue to take forward information on the position and priorities of First Nations and build widespread support for our agenda," Atleo said in the letter. "With the Government, we have been absolutely clear in our opposition to the recent legislation and the overall approach."

Atleo said last week he "pressed for clarity" on the commitments made in January on comprehensive claims and treaty implementation, and the "establishment of clear timelines and targets on these commitments." In the letter, he said Harper expressed agreement with working toward important next steps.

Harper spokesman Carl Vallee said the prime minister and national chief discussed "the progress made since January 11 on priorities we share with First Nations, particularly education and comprehensive claims."

Vallee said the prime minister noted the senior oversight committee on comprehensive claims is making "concrete progress" and encouraged the oversight committee on treaties to "focus their efforts on clear objectives that will lead to tangible, practical measures."

"The Prime Minister said that he also looks forward to continuing to work with the National Chief on the First Nations Education Act," Vallee added. The government aims to have a national First Nations Education Act in place by Sept. 2014.

In the letter to chiefs, Atleo said he also met with Opposition Leader Tom Mulcair and new Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau. Both men "strongly committed to working with First Nations to restore trust and fulfill a nation-to-nation relationship between governments," he said.

mwoods@postmedia.com

Twitter.com/michaelrwoods

© Copyright (c) Postmedia News

Pipeline spill dumps 600,000 litres of contaminated waste water in northern Alberta

[The Province](#)

June 25, 2013 11:41 AM

LITTLE BUFFALO, Alta. — Crews were digging up muskeg and pumping out contaminated waste water Tuesday in an effort to clean up a pipeline spill in northern Alberta near several aboriginal communities.

"Our focus right now is on aggressive action to contain, collect and mitigate the effects of the release," said Greg Moffatt of Calgary-based PennWest Exploration, which owns the pipeline near Little Buffalo.

Initial reports last week that the spill involved 5,000 litres of oil were expanded when the company realized that up to 600,000 litres of what is known as "produced water" had also escaped.

Moffatt said the first estimate was based on a quick visual inspection.

"We notified the regulator based on what we could visually see at the site," he said.

"As soon as our environmental crews were on site and started testing, we quickly realized we were dealing with produced water."

Such water is salty and mineral-laden and often comes out from oil and natural gas wells.

Moffatt said the 1.8-hectare spill site has been sealed off. Extremely high salinity levels around the spill taper off to well below reference standards within about one kilometre, he said.

“We’ve contained the site to mitigate the produced water flow. No waterways have been affected.”

About 30 workers are cleaning up the mess.

About 220,000 litres of water have been pumped out into a massive storage tank that has been built on site. That water will be treated and released, said Moffatt.

Contaminated soil is also being dug out and replaced.

Moffatt couldn’t say how long the pipeline was leaking before it was discovered or how old the line is. It normally carries 97 per cent produced water.

Seven aboriginal bands have been affected. Moffatt said PennWest has been providing regular updates — most recently Monday night.

The First Nations say they are concerned because they use the area for traditional purposes such as hunting and trapping.

© Copyright (c)

First Nations don’t have tanker rights: Lawyer

[Canada First Perspective](#)

25 June 2013 11:43

Robin Rowland

TERRACE, B.C. – The proposed Northern Gateway project reached a major milestone on Monday with the end of public hearings on the pipeline, and now the company will focus on resolving lingering questions, says president John Carruthers.

Carruthers said the focus that has been on the joint review process for several years will now move to building public support and working with the British Columbia government, aboriginal groups and others who brought their concerns to the panel.

“It’s a milestone. Everyone’s been able to submit their evidence, submit their questions and make their voices heard,” he said. “It is good to get through this milestone and look forward to a recommendation at the end of the year.”

Carruthers said Northern Gateway wants to build support for the \$6-billion project.

"In cases where there were still concerns, we'll try and work directly with those people — the province of British Columbia, or aboriginal groups or others — to see if better discussion might address their concerns. That will be ongoing," Carruthers said from Terrace, B.C.

On the final day of arguments, the lawyer for Calgary-based Enbridge (TSX:ENB) told the panel that B.C. First Nations don't have an aboriginal right to direct oil tanker traffic.

Richard Neufeld said that fears expressed by the Haida and other First Nations about possible damage to the herring spawning bed were "a probability of a probability of a probability."

For their part, environmental and aboriginal groups spent the day urging the panel to give no weight to news releases or promises of a "world-class" tanker safety system.

Christopher Jones, a lawyer representing the province of British Columbia, echoed those thoughts on tanker safety, and urged the panel to base its decision "on evidence and not anything else."

Evidence is now closed, and no new agreements or legislative changes will factor into the panel's report to the federal government, due by the end of the year.

The province has told the panel that the project should not go ahead as proposed.

No definitive meeting dates have been set, but Carruthers said discussions with the province will take place now that the hearings are over.

Carruthers also addressed a 10-per cent equity offer made to First Nations.

A legal assessment for one of the bands compiled in 2011 and obtained by The Canadian Press said the anticipated annual average net income would be \$70,500 a year.

He said that while some groups outside of a 160-kilometre corridor might stand to receive as little as that amount, the majority of groups which are inside that zone stand to collect more.

The offer amounts to an average of \$7 million over 30 years — \$280 million in total for all bands—in net benefits, Carruthers said.

Individual negotiations are ongoing, and the company has denied requests for a list of participating bands and the final sums involved, but said it would put an average of about \$230,000 a year into First Nations' coffers.

A legal assessment of the offer also obtained by The Canadian Press said the bands would have to borrow money to buy into the agreement from the company, but an Enbridge spokesman said the loan offer was made at the request of aboriginal groups, which might not be able to obtain as favourable a rate of interest as the pipeline company.

The federal review panel was told by the Haida Nation that 26 of the 45 bands offered equity in B.C. and Alberta had signed on.

The hearings that had become a Canadian battleground for the international fight over global warming ended with little fanfare in the northern city of Terrace, far from the urban centres that hosted the most raucous protests against the pipeline.

Like the Keystone XL line proposed into the United States, the project has been the target of an environmental movement determined to challenge the greenhouse-gas emitting oil industry and the planned expansion of the Alberta oil sands.

But on the final day, only nine of 60 interveners chose to participate and most of the chairs in the room sat empty.

At about the same time as the hearings came to a quiet close, far from the hotel basement where the panel heard parting words, the project proponent, Enbridge Inc., announced it had shut down pipelines in northern Alberta as a result of a weekend spill of synthetic crude.

The spill from Line 37, about 70 kilometres southeast of Fort McMurray, Alta., caused Enbridge to close its Athabasca and Waupisoo pipelines serving Alberta's oilsands.

The company estimates between 500 and 750 barrels of oil had spilled.

Soccer is a chance for Aboriginal youth to excel, coach says

[Prince Albert Herald](#)

June 23, 2014



Herald photo by Kevin Hampson. Coach Ken McDougall's Sturgeon Lake girls' soccer team played at the Youth Soccer Association 2013 outdoor playoffs at Carlton Park Sunday.

Sometimes soccer is more than a sport.

For coach Ken McDougall, it's a chance for the girls in his under-14 Sturgeon Lake First Nation team to overcome obstacles and

achieve their potential.

"These kids are the future of their people," McDougall said Saturday. "That's why we named the team Destiny."

Destiny was one of about 22 First Nations teams to compete in the Prince Albert Youth Soccer Association 2013 outdoor playoffs over the weekend.

That's the most First Nations teams McDougall has seen in his more than 25 years of coaching -- an encouraging observation for the high school math teacher, given his belief in the positive impact that sport has on young peoples' lives.

Aboriginal kids who grow up on reserves face more challenges than average, with lower rates of high school completion, and higher rates of drug abuse and crime.

But First Nations youth who take part in sport are more likely to finish high school and go on to post-secondary education, McDougall said.

Anyone who looks at that correlation "should be encouraging kids on reserves to take part in more sports," he added.

But that's not happening nearly as much as McDougall would like. The Saturday tournament ended the soccer association season, and most of Destiny's players are competing in the First Nations Summer Games in the P.A. Grand Council Team. After that, however, they might not continue playing throughout the year.

"What I'm afraid of is once the summer games are over, these kids are gonna go back to the reserve and no one's going to encourage them to play," McDougall said.

McDougall would like to see band councils sending their youth to summer and winter sessions for sports of all kinds. There are various reasons why that doesn't happen. In some cases it may not be a priority; in other cases, getting off the reserve year-round can be challenging.

"Wollaston (Lake), in winter time, it's either a plane or an ice road over the frozen lake," McDougall said.

The Fond du Lac and Black Lake First Nations are in similarly remote locations, he added.

McDougall says a lot of talent could be going to waste as a result, and he knows talent when he sees it. He's coached teams in the provincial soccer association and players who excelled -- one went on to the Canadian Olympic soccer team and another to the under 19 national team.

But McDougal has never coached a provincial team that had a First Nations player.

Standing on the soccer field Sunday, McDougall rattled off names of girls who are talented enough to become great players.

Four Sturgeon Lake players -- Summer Ermine, Rishonda Ermine, Paige Halkett and Jordyn Sanderson -- could have a shot at the provincial team, McDougal said.

"If you coach them properly, they've got what it takes."

Minister defends aboriginal cuts: Bernard Valcourt says decision won't affect funding for essential services in communities, but First Nations leaders are angry

[Calgary Herald](#)

June 10, 2013

Michael Woods

Months after the Idle No More movement spawned commitments to discuss treaty implementation and comprehensive claims, some groups are dismayed with the federal government's plans to cut project funding to aboriginal organizations.

But Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt says the decision won't affect essential services in First Nations communities, and that the groups should seek other sources of funding.

"Some groups, they have this sense of entitlement because year after year after year, project money was coming," Valcourt told Post-media News. "I think that Canadians would agree that if your advocacy group wants to advocate for certain things, that their supporters should fund them to an extent."

Valcourt made the comments in a wide-ranging interview with Postmedia News in which he defended the government's aboriginal policies, including how it consults with First Nations, its plans for education on reserves and how it's handling the issue of violence against indigenous women.

A June 3 letter from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to 43 aboriginal organizations outlines changes to the way their projects will be funded, continuing a policy announced last year. Its scope and timing alarmed some groups.

For the Assembly of First Nations, it was a surprise 30 per cent cut amounting to \$1.7 million; AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo said the move undermines the potential for progress and is inconsistent with the government's stated intention to work with First Nations.

But Valcourt said the changes won't affect areas such as housing, infrastructure and social services, and would leave funds to focus on "shared priorities" such as economic development.

"I don't equate progress with funding for advocacy groups or national organizations or regional organizations ... although I do admit they do important work," he said.

In February, Prime Minister Stephen Harper tapped Valcourt, 61, to steer the government through the complex and often unforgiving aboriginal affairs file. A former Mulroney cabinet minister who served as a member of Parliament from 1984 to 1993, including a stint as minister of state for Indian affairs, Valcourt took the job about a month after the Idle No More protest movement hit its peak, with demonstrations across the country against Harper's aboriginal agenda.

"I'm concerned about those gaps I see between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians. Whether it's employment, whether it is graduation rates, incarceration rates, suicide rates, name it ... it's serious," Valcourt said in his office in Parliament Hill's centre block. "That's why we're working seriously with First Nations ... with willing stakeholders, who are ready to work with us."

Valcourt, a francophone from New Brunswick, says his top priority as minister is education.

"It is my sincere, profound belief that the greatest legacy that we can leave to First Nations in Canada is an education system that will give those young native people the chance to get the education they need," he said. "We need them to be full participants in our economy." But opinions differ on how to do it. Critics say the federal government needs to provide more cash to close the funding gap between federally funded aboriginal youth and their provincially funded, non-aboriginal counterparts. And the government is working on having a First Nations Education Act in place by the fall of 2014, but some have said consultations haven't been broad enough.

Valcourt maintains the government funds First Nations education on par with what the provinces pay off-reserve. But he concedes money is inconsistent across different regions, something he says new legislation will address.

"We have a mishmash of funding agreements that are not co-ordinated. There's no framework; it doesn't exist. So let's have a legislative framework which will be culturally sensitive, which will allow First Nations to take control of their own education systems," he said.

Tuesday is the five-year anniversary of Harper's historic residential school apology. And while some aboriginal leaders say the promise of that day hasn't translated into enough government action, Valcourt counsels patience.

"When you promise to work for a new relationship, I will admit this raises expectations. But we have to be realistic. This will not be done overnight."

A January meeting between Harper and First Nations leaders at the height of Idle No More spawned government commitments to discuss treaty implementation and comprehensive claims. Valcourt says senior oversight committees in those areas are making progress.

The crux of much aboriginal opposition to Conservative legislation - whether it's for clean water, financial disclosure or matrimonial rights on reserves - is a perceived lack of consultation. Many cite the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which calls for governments to obtain indigenous peoples' "free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them." The Conservatives endorsed the document in 2010 while clarifying its non-binding nature.

Atleo has called for "transformative change" in the government's treatment of First Nations. The Harper government approach, by contrast, has been to chip away at the Indian Act bit by bit; Valcourt cites the First Nations Land Management Regime, which he says gives those who opt in more control over their own land.

Conservative legislative efforts, Valcourt said, "are all consistent with this incremental approach helping First Nations get out of the Indian Act," he said.

"We will not get rid of this Indian Act overnight, this is impossible. We're going to go incrementally."

Valcourt says the government takes seriously its constitutional obligation to consult and accommodate whenever it considers taking an action that will adversely affect an aboriginal right or title.

But he said the UN Declaration is an "aspirational document" that doesn't affect the government's treaty and aboriginal rights obligations under the Constitution.

"It is a veto, literally, that (some people) argue that First Nations will have over the decisions of the government of Canada over anything that affects them. Not just treaty rights, not just aboriginal rights asserted or acknowledged, but everything," he said. "I'm guided by the Supreme Court of Canada duty to consult and accommodate. ... We live this obligation every day, and we take it seriously. But it doesn't mean that every single decision of the government adversely affects aboriginal rights, and those who argue that, I disagree. Take me to court."

The issue of violence against indigenous women has also come up, with groups such as the AFN, the Native Women's Association of Canada and nine provinces pushing for a national inquiry into the issue. The Conservatives have resisted.

"I don't think you have to be a rocket scientist, and I don't think you need a national inquiry, to find out what the problem is," Valcourt said. "This is happening because we know of the legacy of decades of policies toward First Nations that have resulted into what we have today. What is the way out? The way out is not to study anymore. The way out is to take action."

© Copyright (c) The Montreal Gazette

Fort Resolution First Nations team up on forest resources: Fort Resolution Métis Council and Deninu Kue First Nation sign MOU

[CBC News](#)

Jun 24, 2013 9:36 PM CT

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Fort Resolution Métis Council and the Deninu Kue First Nation.

The two parties have agreed to work together regarding forest resources in their traditional N.W.T. territories.

The document brings two parties together which haven't always seen eye to eye.

This five-year agreement lays out how the two will work together. They will both administer how the forest resources are dealt with and who they sell them to.



Louis Balsillie, the chief of the Deninu Kue First Nation in Fort Resolution, N.W.T., said the band's elders always wanted the two groups to work together on common issues. (CBC)

Kara King, president of the Fort Resolution Métis Council, says it's a stepping stone in relations between her organization and the first nation.

"With the emergence of biomass and whatnot, one of the few things that we have to work with for the economy in the South Slave is timber," she said.

Louis Balsillie, chief of the Deninu Kue First Nation, also sees it as a positive direction for the two sides.

"This is what the elders always wanted. They always want the Métis and the band to work together on issues, and something like this is a start and hopefully we can continue with other projects," he said.

Balsillie says the proposed pellet mill in Enterprise, N.W.T., is a future customer of the wood in the area. He says they are also looking for other markets to sell the wood.

First Nations communities embrace post-secondary education possibilities

[Vancouver Sun](#)

June 26, 2013

Jennifer Graham



Steven Swan poses for photo in Waskisui, Sask., Sunday, June 23, 2012. Swan is a recent bachelor of education graduate from First Nations University of Canada. He plans to teach in the north, but for now is working back at the university's Prince Albert campus as its student recruitment officer. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Liam Richards

REGINA - Steven Swan spent nine years jumping from job to job, where "nothing was stable, nothing was secure." Then he decided enough was enough.

Swan, a member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation in northeast Saskatchewan, wanted security and something to be proud of, so he decided to go to university to become a teacher, like his mom.

"She's been teaching for 30-odd years and I just see the profession as something pretty stable, pretty noble, pretty respectable, pretty honourable," said Swan, 34, who recently finished his bachelor of education at Regina's First Nations University of Canada.

Swan is convinced he's not alone: more and more members of Canada's First Nations are opting to embrace post-secondary education as a means to improve their lives, he said.

"Not just young people that are fresh out of high school, going to school and finishing in four years, but older people going back to school because they see the importance of getting an education and they see that in order to get what they need in life...that they need to do something about it and they go to school," he said.

"A lot of them are successful, a lot of them graduate and you see their life changes big time after that."

More than four in 10 First Nations people aged 25 to 64 had some sort of post-secondary qualification, Statistics Canada reported Wednesday in the latest tranche of data from the 2011 National Household Survey, the replacement for the cancelled long-form census.

Of those roughly 174,360 people, 13.2 per cent had a trades certificate; 19.4 per cent a college diploma; 3.6 per cent a university certificate or diploma below the bachelor level; and 8.7 per cent a university degree.

The number of aboriginal people in post-secondary education in Saskatchewan alone reached about 15,000 in 2011-12, up from about 13,000 five years earlier, figures provided by the provincial government indicate.

The University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine is a good example of the shift taking place across the country.

Since 1970, just 45 First Nations and Metis people have graduated from the medical program. Now, there are 40 aboriginal people enrolled in the four-year undergraduate program.

A new program that reserves 10 per cent of first-year spaces for persons of aboriginal descent has made a big difference, said professor Barry Ziola, who is also the school's director of admissions.

"We have the highest proportion of self-declared aboriginal students of any of the medical schools in Canada," Ziola said.

In the College of Arts and Science in the mid to late-1980s, there were 75 self-declared aboriginals out of 5,500 students, Ziola recalled. Now there are 800 aboriginal students out of about 7,000 in arts and science.

Aboriginal people are looking for opportunities, said College of Medicine aboriginal co-ordinator Valerie Arnault-Pelletier.

"There's the saying, 'Education is the new buffalo,' because historically the buffalo gave us food, clothing and shelter, and now as First Nations and Metis people, we need to look to education to give us those things," Arnault-Pelletier said.

The dark legacy of the residential school era, which deprived First Nations children of their families and culture and exposed many to physical and sexual abuse, naturally made education seem like it wasn't an option, said University of Saskatchewan associate professor Alex Wilson.

Now, the goal of a post-secondary education is closer than ever, said Wilson, of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation in northern Manitoba. Wilson was also an organizer of the Idle No More movement, a broad social-media campaign that's mobilizing aboriginal communities across Canada.

"It takes a while for those numbers to shift over time and I think that's what we're seeing now is the result of a lot of social justice movements, a lot of advocacy in terms of First Nations people and education and treaty rights. I think that's what's happening," said Wilson.

"I think Idle No More is kind of a culmination of all those years of hard work that people have been doing and this is kind of a nexus of it."

There are still many basic barriers to overcome, Wilson warned: some communities, for instance, don't even have road access to allow people to get to school. But there's a sense of change in the air, she added.

"I think there is an excitement right now and it connects to social movements, but it also connects with a sense of hopefulness and possibility and seeing that it's not just about getting numbers or filling quotas. It is really about changing social consciousness," Wilson said.

"And when people can see that that's happened or that's even possible, I think that sparks an energy in people, especially students when they know how much power they have."

Wilson warned against "lumping" all aboriginal people together, however, and also noted that First Nations communities have a historically low level of participation in exercises like the census and the National Household Survey.

Data from the survey should be taken with a grain of salt, she said.

University of British Columbia professor Jo-ann Archibald, associate dean in the school's Indigenous Education program, said she believes post-secondary institutions have become more welcoming for aboriginal students.

"A lot of the young students will see that aboriginal people are in various professions and in different levels of education, so they see aboriginal people in these roles and it makes them think, 'Well, gee, I can do that,'" she said.

"And I think some of the aboriginal organizations and professional organizations have put aboriginal education...as a priority."

First Nations explore tourism options: Wasaya Group consultant says potential for tourism 'unlimited,' looking for First Nations input

[CBC News](#)

Jun 26, 2013 1:30 PM ET



First Nations people in Ontario's north are being encouraged to have their say in developing tourism in their communities. (CBC)

A tourism consultant says the "raw, virgin land and lakes, clean beautiful air and friendly, warm-hearted people" in Ontario's remote First Nations could draw many visitors to the area, despite the distances.

Bruce Fallen is working with the Wasaya Group to consult with First Nations about what experiences they'd like to offer tourists. The Wasaya Group is owned by 12 First Nations in northwestern Ontario and runs several businesses, including Wasaya Airways.

"The potential for tourism is unlimited," Fallen said. "We're consulting with the 12 Wasaya First Nations over the summer to find out how the communities see the tourism industry. We can't go in and tell residents what they should offer to visitors."

Fallen sees eco-tourism, cultural tourism and fishing and hunting as three areas for development for First Nations, but he said it could be a decade or more before there is a fully-fledged tourism industry in the remote north.

Keeping youth 'close to home'

Still, Fallen said, the benefits are worth the time and effort.

"Unlike mining and forestry, tourism as an economic driver takes nothing from the land but enjoyment," he said.

One of the biggest benefits Fallen sees in First Nations communities is the ability to provide employment for young people.

"[They can] keep their youth there in the summer and keep them close to home and let them experience what outside visitors see in their communities," he said.

"When they're talking to outside visitors, they're going to be very happy with what they're going to hear, this in turn will create lots of pride in their communities. They're going to be proud to work there and live there."

A tourism summit is planned for December and will pull together the information gathered during the summer consultation sessions to help First Nations and the Wasaya Group determine how to proceed.

Idle No More: Canada Escalates War on First Nations

[Indian Country Today](#)

June 26, 2013

Winona LaDuke and Frank Jr. Molley



Facebook/Esgenoopetij First Nation "Burnt Church". Idle No More Unity March in New Brunswick in January (Facebook/Esgenoopetij First Nation "Burnt Church")

Mi'kmaq and Maliseet reserves in Atlantic Canada are the sites of a new major battle between First Nation activists and the Canadian government that represents the next stage of the Idle No More movement. The flash point came when the Conservative government threw down the gauntlet with what some call sign-or-starve consent agreements presented to First Nations right across the country.

Facing increasingly strong opposition to both its extractive industries and its federal policies, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government has adopted a hard-line strategy seemingly designed to eliminate First Nations' negotiating power and rights. Harper's cudgels are annual contribution agreements between the government and the First Nations that have new, questionable appendices that are forcing some of the poorest communities to take it or leave it, or



Bartibogue calls the new agreement terms "blackmail."

worse, face third-party management, which would essentially mean having the Canadian government manage their finances and governmental affairs. At stake here is title over Indian lands and minerals, as well as a host of choices on the future direction of Canada.

The government seems to be focused on getting de facto termination of many constitutionally and treaty protected rights of First Nations. Its first thrust in this battle was this past fall's Bill C-45, which gutted most of Canada's environmental laws and was the spur for last year's Idle No More movement. "It took away a lot of the treaty muscle First Nations have," says Nina Wilson, one of Idle No More's founders, of that bill.

Since the eruption of the Idle No More movement in early December, there have been many amendments to Canadian laws that threaten aboriginal peoples rights and their traditional lands, all of them enacted as part of what the government calls "Canada's Economic Action Plan." Although dubbed a long-term plan to strengthen the Canadian economy, the majority of the "actions" in this plan will curtail aboriginal peoples rights over their lands and resources. The government seems to be trying to undermine the traditional "derogation" provision, a clause that Chelsea Vowel, a Métis scholar and blogger for Apihtawikosisan.com, explains "is central to every agreement between First Nations and the Canadian government." A nonderogation clause in aboriginal law generally reads like this: Nothing in this agreement shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the protection provided for existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada by the recognition and affirmation of those rights in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

In "Are you alarmed? You should be," an article posted on Apihtawikosisan.com, Vowel explains that these new my-way-or-the-highway agreements include language that is, "typical legal doublespeak. Your rights are protected... unless we need to violate them to carry out this legislation that we did not create with adequate consultation with you and further, we will not consult with you as we carry out these legislative duties."

The new consent agreements bearing these bits of subterfuge are the staple of financial support for First Nations, funding essential health care, education and housing. "Some new agreements with the bands are designed to force a land



Downie, Premiere Gold Mines (AP)

surrender," says Wilson. "In other cases, basic rights, like the right to potable water—which is not available in a number of First Nations—are being linked to a diminishment of rights."

All this comes at a time when many First Nations are in dire financial straits. "We have been receiving very minimal support for services in our communities," Wilson explains. "[Federal appropriations are] based on prices that date back to the last millennium. For instance, one community gets \$4,000 a

year for snow removal, and in fact is spending \$36,000 a year. That money has to come from somewhere. [This annual shortfall] has snowballed into a debt, and bands have no way of taking care of it. Bands now are being faced with new financial negotiations, and many bands are in the red because of the low-ball appropriations.”

The omnibus budget bill enacted in January has been criticized by opposition MPs as an attempt to subvert the democratic process. The bill was rushed through Parliament, along with many supplementary bills, eight of which directly affect aboriginal peoples and their lands. Of concern to First Nations are changes to legislation on water rights, matrimonial law, the Indian Act, education, health, privatization of Indian lands, taxation on reserves and on the matter of financial transparency and accountability.

Cree Lawyer Sharon Venne is an international human rights attorney and watchdog on federal aboriginal policy. Her experience in dealing with the feds is extensive, most notably as chief negotiator for First Nations for 10 years in Canada’s Northwest Territories. She held a special presentation in October in Kahnawake, Mohawk territory in which she explained that the federal plan is to absolve federal fiduciary obligations, which are essential elements of both treaties and federal Indian policy, based on a notorious set of policy recommendations dating back to the 1960s called the white paper. “What they are doing [now] is ‘frustrating’ the application of S.91(24) in the British North American Act, ‘Indians and Lands Reserved for Indians,’ by transferring this stuff to the Provinces and they are doing it through all kinds of mechanisms. It’s not only through legislation, but it’s through the [annual] contribution agreements.”

That shift would diminish the nation-to-nation relationships between Canada and all the First Nations—in particular their legal jurisdiction and responsibilities—by putting them under the control of local authorities.

Burnt Church

Esgenoopetitj Burnt Church is a Mi’kmaq First Nation that has an unenviable claim to fame: it is reported to be the poorest postal code in all of Canada. In mid-March, it was sent their annual contribution agreement. This time the agreement was different—it didn’t contain the standard non-derogation clause, which erodes treaty rights in return for money. Treaty and aboriginal rights are no longer explicitly acknowledged, which means they are, implicitly, imperiled. Councilor Mr. Curtis Bartibogue is outraged by this change in tactics by the government. “It’s blackmail, and it’s the most illegal thing ever done.... We told the [Aboriginal Affairs] Minister it’s like you’re putting a gun to our head and telling us to sign.”

What happened next surprised many, perhaps the Canadian government most of all. Despite the dire conditions of the community—80 percent unemployment, and essentially full dependency on the promised copy6 million funding allocation—Burnt



Church refused to sign. "The outcome of our meeting was that we can't sign," Bartibogue says. "We asked the public and informed them of the situation and they stand behind us not to sign. To accept the social reform, the omitting clauses of the treaties and the case before the courts, is something we can't do to our community."

Chief Allan Adam of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

"The government, through its contribution agreements, is trying to get First Nations to sign onto [their policies] or else be cut from their funding," Chief Allan Adam of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation in Alberta told a HillTimes.com reporter. He said his nation refused to sign its contribution agreement, worth more than copy million, because it doesn't agree with the federal government's omnibus budget implementation legislation. In Saskatchewan, Cree First Nations similarly decided to say 'No.' "One of the council members took the whole appendix home and read it all. There were a lot of conditions never seen before. Some signed and some didn't," Christine Dieter, a First Nations woman in southern Saskatchewan, told a reporter for Ipolitics.ca, an electronic newsmagazine. The appendix allegedly requires the bands to support federal omnibus legislation and proposed resource developments as a condition of getting their funding. Some bands have already signed the funding agreements out of necessity, noting that they did so under duress.

The harsh reality behind this power play is that 200 years of Canadian development has left First Nation economies underfunded. Canadian mining and forestry have essentially stripped their resources for a paltry sum. Today, many of Canada's 617 First Nations live in third-world conditions. Negotiations are too often uneven. As prominent Native scholar Russell Diabo wrote, "It seems the negotiating First Nations are so compromised by their federal loans, and dependent on the negotiations funding stream that they are unable or unwilling to withdraw from the tables en masse and make real on the demand that the Harper government reform its comprehensive claims and self-government policies to be consistent with the articles of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples]."

Manufacturing Consent

What's at stake for Canada is an estimated \$650 billion extraction industry worth of minerals, oil, gas and trade-route access for pipeline companies. Canada's domination of a world minerals market is at risk because First Nations are saying 'No' and are making demands. For the first time in six years, Canada failed to top the mining industry's list of the best mining jurisdictions in the world. Indigenous

rights are a challenge to that economy. "I would say one of the big things that is weighing on mining investment in Canada right now is First Nations issues," Ewan Downie, told Reuters. Downie is chief executive officer of Premier Gold Mines, which owns numerous projects in northern Ontario. Half a million Canadians and their livelihoods are tied in the copy20 billion-a-year industry within the fields of natural gas, natural gas liquids, crude oil, oil sands and other mineral extractions, according to a 2013 Statistical Handbook issued by Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. (Many argue that all of those resources originate on First Nation territories.)

Prior and informed consent is a part of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and most international protocols. This becomes an international legal standard of how business is done, after hundreds of years of theft and genocide, in order to secure lands from Indigenous peoples. Hence, international accords today enable fair agreements with Indigenous peoples over their lands and resources. Now, with an increasingly educated, and empowered Indigenous community, evidenced by the Idle No More movement, that standard of consent is not looking so easy to secure. This is particularly true as communities themselves challenge, what has become, essentially entrenched power.

As Professor Pamela Palmater of Toronto's Ryerson University explains, "[The Idle No More] movement was about educating First Nations to say no.... " And saying "no" has already slowed or derailed at least a half-dozen energy and mining projects in British Columbia. "It's the project-killer, the investment killer," says Clayton Thomas-Muller, a Cree organizer with the Indigenous Tar Sands campaign.

In March, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation blocked access for HudBay Minerals Inc. to its Lalor Lake mine project in Manitoba. Protesters blockaded access to the gold-copper-zinc mine for several hours, demanding talks with the company on an ownership stake in the \$773.84 million project. Blockades have increased dramatically over this winter, spurred on by the federal government's failure to consult, along with their green light nods toward new aggressive mining interests, many of which are in more remote and pristine areas than ever before. The companies are also facing a more politicized and mobilized grassroots movement that is determined to defend the constitutionally protected rights of First Nations.

In late September former cabinet minister Jim Prentice slammed both the government and the oil industry for not addressing First Nation concerns. Yet Canada's Bill C-45 paved the way across aboriginal territory without much adherence to consultation or accommodation let alone the environment, opening new resource extraction opportunities with Suncor Energy, Enbridge, TransCanada and a sleuth of junior mining and natural gas companies effectively giving their activities the green light.

Last year, TransCanada reportedly floated the idea of a pipeline to the East. New Brunswick's Premier David Alward "has been traveling the country peddling the virtues of a West-East oil pipeline that would see Alberta and Saskatchewan crude flow to a refinery in Saint John," reported the Financial Post. The pipeline might go through territory of the Maliseet and Mi'kmaq peoples, and one source says that the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs of New Brunswick were not consulted about the plans. This is disturbing in many respects, including the fact that Alward is, thanks to a consolidation of power in the Maritime provinces, also responsible for aboriginal affairs in the province.

Can the Harper government be thwarted in this attempt to subjugate and exploit the First Nations? U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples James Anaya, who is completing a report for the United Nations on extractive industries and Indigenous Peoples, has been requesting to formally enter Canada since early 2012. He was finally given formal approval in April.

In the meantime, the Idle No More movement that began late last year has bloomed this spring with new force, an Indigenous Spring, so to speak, that is spreading from eastern Canada's Burnt Church to northern Saskatchewan. Native people are declaring that consent cannot be manufactured by federal threats.

Memorial totem pole sought at Crab Park for Pickton's victims

[The Province](#)

June 25, 2013



Mary Point leads a First Nations drum circle Monday at the Vancouver parks board offices before a meeting at which supporters urged approval of a memorial totem at Crab Park for women killed by Robert Pickton.

Photograph by: Steve Bosch, PNG

Proponents of memorial for the victims of women murdered at the Pickton family farm held a prayer circle and vigil before Monday night's meeting of the Vancouver parks board.

The Klahoose First Nation from the Sunshine Coast has donated a red cedar tree for a memorial pole in memory of the women killed at the pig farm in Coquitlam.

The vigil included drumming and prayers and songs to mourn, honour and remember the victims.

Speakers urged parks board approval for a memorial totem pole in Crab Park on the Downtown Eastside.

Organizer Kelly White said the proposal for a memorial has attracted the support of a number of groups and individuals, including Musqueam First Nation, filmmakers and city councillors.

More than 40 carvers have expressed interest in creating the totem, she said.

Robert Pickton was convicted in 2007 of killing six women on his farm and was charged with the deaths of 20 more but Crown decided not to proceed on those counts.

White said it's important to create a memorial in the memory of women killed by Pickton.

© Copyright (c) The Province

Ottawa grants permission for UN official to visit Aboriginal peoples

[APTN National News](#)

27. Jun, 2013



After much stalling, Ottawa finally gave the go-ahead for a UN official who monitors the treatment Indigenous peoples to visit Canada.

James Anaya, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples, is expected to arrive in October and remain in the country for "several weeks," according to Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo.

Anaya will meet with First Nations, Metis and Inuit during his stay to "get an understanding of the state of affairs."

Anaya had been requesting permission to visit since February 2012. He wrote the Harper government at least three times requesting he be allowed in on an official visit.

Special rapporteurs that hold mandates from the UN Human Rights Council can't enter countries without official consent.

Anaya said in a March letter to the Union of BC Indian Chiefs that he was also considering finding unofficial channels to meet with Indigenous people in Canada if Ottawa continued to ignore his requests.

Iran calls on Canada to respect rights of indigenous people

[Press TV](#)

Jun 26, 2013 10:13PM GMT

Iran has called on Canada to respect its obligations regarding the basic rights of the First Nations, expressing concern over the discriminatory handling of the indigenous population in the country.

In a Wednesday statement, the Iranian Foreign Ministry strongly urged the Canadian government "to adhere to its commitments toward aboriginals, including the rights stipulated in the [UN] Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

It also voiced Tehran's "deep concern over persistence of the systematic discrimination" and "the inhuman situation" it has inflicted on the aboriginal people.

The statement further praised Canadian indigenous people for their strong will and courage in pursuing their long-violated rights, and extended Iran's congratulations to them on the occasion of National Aboriginal Day.

On June 21, Canada's indigenous people marked the occasion by staging anti-government protest rallies in Ottawa, with the New Democratic Party (NDP) predicting a "hot summer" of displeasure among the country's aboriginals.

"I can tell from having talked to hundreds of representatives of First Nations that that frustration is palpable, it's growing, especially amongst the young people," NDP leader Tom Mulcair stated.

The government of Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has come under criticism for widespread violation of the rights of the country's indigenous

community.

A recent study by the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives says almost 50 percent of indigenous children in Canada are living in poverty that is three times more than the national average.

Many of Canada's natives continue to suffer unsafe drinking water, inadequate housing, addiction, and high suicide rates.

In a report released in December 19, 2012, Amnesty International called on Ottawa to address human rights abuses in the country, particularly with respect to the rights of indigenous peoples.

Percentage of aboriginals with a university degree lags

[The StarPhoenix](#)

June 27, 2013

Jason Warick

Although progress is being made, the percentage of aboriginal people with a university degree is still only half that of the rest of the Saskatchewan population.

Just 9.5 per cent of Saskatchewan aboriginal people aged 25-64 have university degrees, according to Statistics Canada's National Household Survey.

This compares with a rate of 21 per cent in the general population.

"There's a ton of work that needs to be done and can be done," said the University of Saskatchewan Student's Union president Max FineDay.

FineDay, the first status Indian to serve in that position, said all levels of government "need to invest in First Nations and Metis students."

He noted the funding discrepancy between First Nations reserve schools and the rest of the province.

If the elementary and high school systems were funded adequately, more First Nations people would be prepared to succeed at the university level.

As for the U of S, there are still not nearly enough aboriginal staff and faculty. However, things are improving, he said.

In addition to the USSU president, former Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Blaine Favel was recently made the first First Nations chancellor in the school's history.

FineDay said these are important symbols, as is the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Centre, which has recently begun construction on campus.

"We need to see ourselves in these institutions," he said.

"This is not an aboriginal problem. This is a problem for Canada, for Saskatchewan."

The education differences are even more pronounced when looking solely at aboriginal men.

Only six per cent of them have a degree.

FineDay said the difference on campus is obvious. He said many aboriginal women realize the importance of being a good role model and providing for their families. He hopes greater numbers of aboriginal men will soon follow that lead.

© Copyright (c) The StarPhoenix

Young aboriginal women becoming education role models for their children

[Ottawa Citizen](#)

June 26, 2013

Michael Woods



Doreen Caddell-Letai helps Kindergarten student Destynd Jackson with a craft in the classroom. Prince Charles elementary school is all aboriginal kids. (Candace Elliott, Edmonton Journal)

OTTAWA — There's a glimmer of hope in some otherwise bleak numbers about the education of Canada's aboriginals: young indigenous women appear to be making

clear educational strides.

University of Saskatchewan Prof. Ken Coates, Canada research chair in regional innovation and a leading expert on aboriginal issues, told Postmedia News this week there's anecdotal evidence that indigenous women in their 30s and 40s are

returning to college – thus establishing themselves as role models for their children, who are then more likely to go on to their own post-secondary education.

Now, new data support that observation. According to Statistics Canada's National Household Survey, which released fresh figures Wednesday, more than 27 per cent of aboriginal women ages 35 to 44 have a college diploma, compared to 18 per cent of men in that age group and 21 per cent of aboriginal women ages 55 to 64.

Overall, the younger women are more educated. Fourteen per cent have university degrees, for instance, compared to just half that number among men. And while younger aboriginal men hold similar education levels as their older counterparts, 10 per cent more women ages 35 to 44 have post-secondary qualifications than women ages 55 to 64, according to the data.

Yet despite that good news, aboriginal Canadians continue to lag behind non-aboriginals in educational attainment, with the largest gap still at the university level.

Nearly half of aboriginal people ages 25 to 64 have a post-secondary qualification of some sort, according to data from the National Household Survey, compared to nearly two-thirds of non-Aboriginals. Overall, fewer than one in 10 aboriginal people holds a university degree, compared to more than one-quarter of non-aboriginals in the same age group.

Another gap occurs in the number of Aboriginals who have no certificate, diploma or degree whatsoever: nearly 30 per cent, compared to just 12 per cent of non-aboriginal people in the same age group. More than one-fifth of aboriginal people declared a high-school diploma or equivalent as their highest level of education.

The 2011 National Household Survey, to which 2.65 million households responded, replaces the mandatory long-form census, which the Harper government scrapped in 2010. Experts say the voluntary nature of the survey leaves some gaps in the data from groups who tend not to respond to voluntary surveys, including Aboriginals, new immigrants and low-income families. But they also say the data should provide a fairly accurate broad-scale picture of Canada.

The numbers on aboriginal education have inched slightly upward from the 2006 census. But Statistics Canada cautions that comparing the census with the 2011 survey data should take into account that the two sources represent different populations; for example, residents in collective dwellings are excluded from the National Household Survey's target population.

The survey, in dealing with those ages 25 to 64, also doesn't touch a large swath of Canada's Aboriginals, the country's fastest-growing population. Data from the same

survey released earlier this year showed that nearly half of Canada's aboriginal people were age 24 and under.

The federal government is touting First Nations education as a cornerstone of its aboriginal policy. Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt has called education his top priority, and the government says it plans to have a First Nations Education Act in place by September 2014.

But the data show little progress for First Nations in some areas. For example, the general proportion of First Nations people with trade certificates and college diplomas — about 13 per cent and 19 per cent, respectively — is largely unchanged from the 2006 census.

The Harper government, in its most recent budget, tried to address the training issue with a new \$241-million program that ties income assistance for young Aboriginals on-reserve to skills training. The thought is that training the underemployed aboriginal workforce can help resource development companies working in remote areas deal with skill shortages.

Among people with registered Indian status, the contrast between those on- and off-reserve is stark. More than 10 per cent of those living off-reserve had university degrees, compared to less than five per cent for those on-reserve.

"We know the really serious problems: consistent challenges failing to complete high school and very serious problems with transition into university," said Coates. "The question, really, is why does the problem persist?"

Coates also said it's overly simplistic to track progress in aboriginal education by merely looking at graduation rates. "Let's be careful about using simple graduation rates and participation rates as surrogates for real achievement."

mwoods@postmedia.com

Twitter.com/michaelrwoods

COMPARING EDUCATION RATES

Highest level of education, aboriginals vs. non-aboriginals:

University degree

Aboriginal: 9.8 per cent

Non-Aboriginal: 25.9 per cent

College diploma

Aboriginal: 20.6 per cent

Non-Aboriginal: 21.3 per cent

Trades certificate

Aboriginal: 14.4 per cent

Non-Aboriginal: 12.1 per cent

High school

Aboriginal: 22.8 per cent

Non-Aboriginal: 23.2 per cent

No certificate, diploma or degree

Aboriginal: 28.9 per cent

Non-aboriginal: 12.1 per cent

Breakdown of Aboriginal groups:

At least a high school diploma

Metis: 73.6 per cent

First Nations: 60.2 per cent

Inuit: 41 per cent

Post-secondary qualification

Metis: 54.8 per cent

First Nations: 44.8 per cent

Inuit: 35.6 per cent

Highest levels of education

University degree

Metis: 11.7 per cent

First Nations: 8.7 per cent

Inuit: 5.1 per cent

College diploma

Metis: 23.2 per cent

First Nations: 19.4 per cent

Inuit: 15.6 per cent

Trades certificate

Metis: 16.3 per cent

First Nations: 13.2 per cent

Inuit: 13.2 per cent

© Copyright (c) Postmedia News

Aboriginal critic wants city to move proposed bridge: City official says bridge design was created in consultation with aboriginal groups

[CBC News](#)

Jun 27, 2013 11:52 AM MT



Phillip Coutu says the city failed to consult with aboriginal groups prior to deciding where the new Walterdale bridge would be constructed. (CBC)

Although provisional work is already underway to replace the Walterdale Bridge, some aboriginal Edmontonians are asking the city to reconsider the bridge's location.

Phillip Coutu would like the city to re-route the new bridge slightly to the east of current plans to avoid what he considers a sacred burial ground in Rosssdale.

"The current route will destroy the historic landing. It's an archaeological treasure," said Coutu, a long-time critic of the city's dealings with regards to the area.

He says the city failed to adequately consult with aboriginal groups in the city prior to starting work on the bridge.

"As a Métis person, for me, what this means is it brings disharmony to all of us," he added. "It will be symbolic of the way First Nations people are treated in Alberta."



City special projects manager Byron Nicholson says the city consulted with more than 20 aboriginal groups prior to choosing the current proposed bridge alignment. (CBC)

But city special projects manager Byron Nicholson said that isn't the case.

As part of its request to amend the legal boundaries of the burial

ground, the city consulted with 21 separate aboriginal groups in the Edmonton prior to cementing any bridge plans.

"This was the most in-depth consultation process ever in the city of Edmonton for any previous bridge or road projects," said Nicholson. "We're very happy with the way it turned out and with the effort put in."

Nicholson said the city incorporated as many of the suggestions made by Coutu and other aboriginal consultants as possible.

The final alignment avoids the Rosssdale burial ground, but will require an information display to be moved.

"The alignment that was chosen eventually and approved by council was chosen for a couple of reasons," he said. "One: it allows the old bridge to remain open during construction, which is a big benefit. Secondly, it minimizes the impact on the north side because we're building right adjacent to the old bridge and the area that we're impacting was all previously disturbed."

With a contractor lined up and construction scheduled to begin next month, Nicholson said it is too late to consider an alternate bridge location.



Although the burial ground itself will not be impacted by the new bridge, these information plaques will need to be re-located. (CBC)

Aboriginal consultation will continue throughout construction, however.

Nicholson said aboriginal monitors will be on site throughout bridge construction to ensure that no cultural resources are negatively impacted.

Police strategy on National Aboriginal Day: Arrest Aboriginals

Rabble.ca

June 25, 2013

Adrienne Silnicki



Friday, June 21 was National Aboriginal Day, which according to the Federal Government is when "Canadians from all walks of life are invited to participate in the many National Aboriginal Day events that will be taking place from coast to coast to coast."

What better day to drive up to the Mi'kmaq community of Elsipogtog and join both indigenous and non-indigenous

in the fight to save the land, water and democracy from the for-profit and corporate interests of SWN? It seemed pretty appropriate to me!

On Friday morning, an ally and I drove from Halifax to Highway 126 with a vehicle full of supplies we were asked to bring by the local community. We had coolers filled with ice, wood for the sacred fire, bags of blankets and sleeping bags, several different types of lanterns and flashlights, and a large tent for people to keep themselves and their kitchen dry, purchased by the Council of Canadians thanks to our members!

When we reached the Sacred Fire a large civil disobedience action had just ended and 12 members of the community had been arrested. We gathered in a large group to listen to people sharing accounts of what they had witnessed.

Several accounts were given of a man who ran in front of a slowly moving truck and grabbed onto its bumper. The truck came to a stop and he slide underneath it. The police arrested him -- some people felt the police were handling the man quite roughly- when a woman ran to stop the arrest. It's unclear how she was hurt -- some suggest she hit her face on the ground during the arrest, others claim they saw the police hit her -- but when the woman was pulled to her feet, she was bleeding from the side of her mouth.

Another woman who chose to stand in the road was 8 1/2 months pregnant. She was arrested but fortunately the first to be released from a jail in Moncton (as a side note, the men and women are still being taken to separate jails cities away from each other).

While on this National Aboriginal Day, both indigenous and non-indigenous protestors stood side-by-side on the highway in front of the trucks. Several people reported that non-indigenous protestors were being surrounded by the police and forced off the road, while indigenous protestors were much more quickly arrested. In the end, both indigenous and non-indigenous were arrested, but several of the witness felt there was an obvious difference in the way people were being treated that seemed racially biased.

I also heard several stories about police officers telling indigenous protestors to stop protesting with non-indigenous. Sounds like a pretty obvious divide and conquer tactic and fortunately everyone present had a good chuckle over it.

After the community debriefed about what they had witnessed, the women began to drum and the community gathered around the Sacred Fire. Some members of the community went to hold signs and banners beside the road, educating passersby and asking for their support. Easily 80 per cent of the vehicles that passed by honked their horns, gave a thumbs up, or cheered and waved. Even a passenger train blew its whistle while passengers waved their support. It seemed like the only people who sped up to pass the protestors were the two dozen or so police cars and paddy wagons that drove back and forth along the highway.

The community in Elsipogtog is incredibly strong! It was so inspirational to see people comforting one another, looking after each other, strategizing over what to do next, and still so passionate about the fight despite weeks of living in tents, being rained on, being away from their families, being jailed, and having friends and community members hurt by the police. When I left Friday night I was exhausted and so, so inspired!

If you're interested in seeing photos of the encampment, please see the [Council's Flickr account](#).

Thank you to the community of Elsipogtog for letting me join you for the day and for teaching me so much! Good luck to our Fredericton Chapter of the Council of Canadians who has been visiting, protesting and sleeping at the Elsipogtog camp. The Council of Canadians will continue to support Elsipogtog and the fight for clean water, safe land, and democracy however we can.

Photo from the [Council of Canadians blog](#) where this entry first appeared.

Enbridge asked to 'cease and desist' pipeline work: Alliance pursuing legal action, also considering physically blocking Enbridge

[CBC News](#)

Jun 27, 2013 12:13 PM PT



Protesters from B.C. first nations groups in Edmonton to protest the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline. (CBC)

Members of a First Nations group in northern B.C. are warning Enbridge against trespassing on their lands for work along the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline.

Members of the Yinka Dene Alliance, whose territories are along the proposed pipeline, have sent a "cease and desist" letter saying they are opposed to Enbridge seeking temporary permits to conduct preliminary work, including drilling and tree removal.

Alliance spokesperson Jackie Thomas says the company is not authorized to conduct this work on their land.

"The Joint Review Panel, the National Energy Board, hasn't even finished its report or made any kind of recommendation for this work to go forward," she said.

Thomas says the alliance will first pursue legal action against the company for trespassing.

She says they are also considering physically blocking Enbridge from doing work.

The alliance says they are also seeking a meeting with Premier Christy Clark to talk about their concerns.